

Indian cuisine

Indian cuisine consists of thousands of regional cuisines which date back thousands of years. The dishes of India are characterized by the extensive use of various Indian spices, herbs, vegetables and fruits. Indian cuisine is also known for the widespread practice of vegetarianism in Indian society. Each and every family of Indian cuisine includes a wide assortment of dishes and cooking techniques. Indian cuisine also varies from region to region, reflecting the varied demographics of the ethnically-diverse subcontinent.

Hindu beliefs and culture have played an influential role in the evolution of Indian cuisine.^[1] However, cuisine across India also evolved as a result of the subcontinent's large-scale cultural interactions with the Mongols and the British, making it a unique blend of some various cuisines.^{[2][3]} The spice trade between India and Europe is often cited as the main catalyst for Europe's Age of Discovery.^[4] Indian cuisine has influenced cuisines across the world, especially those from Southeast Asia and the Caribbean.^{[5][6]}

History

Indian cuisine has been influenced by a 5000-year history of various groups and cultures interacting with the subcontinent, leading to the diversity of flavors and regional cuisines found in modern-day India.

Antiquity

Many recipes first emerged during the initial Vedic period, when India was still heavily forested and agriculture was complemented with game hunting and forest produce. In Vedic times, a normal diet consisted of fruit, vegetables, grain, dairy products, honey, and poultry and other sorts of meats. Over time, some segments of the population embraced vegetarianism. This was facilitated by the advent of Buddhism and an equitable climate permitting a variety of fruits, vegetables, and grains to be grown throughout the year. A food classification system that categorized any item as *saatvic*, *raajasic* or *taamsic* developed in Ayurveda. A reference to the kind of food one is to eat is also discussed in the Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 17, Verses 8,9 & 10).^[7] In this period eating beef became taboo, a belief still commonly held today.

Middle Ages

During the Middle Ages, several North Indian dynasties were predominant, including the Gupta dynasty. Travelers who visited India brought with them new cooking methods and products such as tea and spices. Later, India saw the period of Central Asian and Afghan conquerors, which saw the emergence of the Mughlai cuisine many people now associate with India. This included the addition of several seasonings, such as saffron, and the practice of cooking in a sealed pot called a *dum*.

Ingredients



Spices at a grocery shop in India



Lentils are a staple ingredient in Indian cuisine.

The staples of Indian cuisine are Pearl millet (*bajra*), rice, whole wheat flour (*atta*), and a variety of pulses, of which the most central to this cuisine are *masoor* (most often red lentils), *channa* (bengal gram), *toor* (pigeon pea or yellow gram), *urad* (black gram), and *moong* (green gram). Pulses may be used whole, dehusked – for example, *dhuli moong* or *dhuli urad* – or split. Split pulses, or *dal*, are used extensively. Some pulses, such as *channa* and *mung*, are also processed into flour (*besan*).

Most Indian curries are cooked in vegetable oil. In northern and western India, peanut oil is popular, while in eastern India, mustard oil is more commonly used. Coconut oil is used widely along the western coast, especially in Kerala; *gingelly* (sesame) oil is common in the south, as well. In recent decades, sunflower and soybean oil have become popular across India. Hydrogenated vegetable oil, known as *Vanaspati ghee*, is another popular cooking medium. Butter-based ghee, or *desi ghee*, is used very frequently, but still less used than before.

The most important or frequently used spices in Indian cuisine are chilli pepper, black mustard seed (*sarso*), cumin (*jeera*), turmeric (*haldi*), fenugreek (*methi*), asafoetida (*hing*), ginger (*adrak*), coriander (*dhania*), and garlic (*lehsun*). One popular spice mix is *garam masala*, a powder that typically includes five or more dried spices, especially cardamom, cinnamon, and clove. Each region, and sometimes each individual chef, has a distinctive *garam masala* blend. *Goda masala* is a comparable, though sweet, spice mix that is popular in Maharashtra. Some leaves commonly used for flavoring include bay (*tejpat*), coriander, fenugreek, and mint leaves. The use of curry leaves and roots is typical of Gujarati and all South Indian cuisine. Sweet dishes are seasoned with cardamom, saffron, nutmeg, and rose petal essences.

Regional cuisines

Cuisine differs across India's diverse regions as a result of variation in local cultures, geographical locations (e.g., whether a region is close to the sea, desert or the mountains), and economics. It also varies seasonally, depending on what fruits and vegetables are ripe.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Seafood plays a major role in the cuisines of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which were, and still are inhabited by the indigenous Andamanese. Since they had very little contact with the outside world, raw fish and fruits were their staple diet for a long time, but as people immigrated from other regions of India, the cuisine became more varied.

Andhra Pradesh



Pesarattu, a popular Andhra dish, served with *kobbari pachadi* (chutney made using coconut)

Cuisine of the southern state of Andhra Pradesh is referred to as Telugu and Hyderabad cuisine. Rice is the staple starch and is usually consumed with a variety of curries and lentil soups or broths. Although many people in this region are vegetarians, people living in the coastal areas are known for their seafood dishes. Food in Andhra Pradesh is known for the heavy usage of spices and chillies. One of the most important parts of the Andhra cuisine is the use of various pickles, such as *avakaya*, a pickle made from green mango, and *gongura*, a pickle made from red sorrel leaves. Curds are a common addition to meals to neutralize the spiciness of the food. Another popular Andhra Pradesh dish is Hyderabad biryani, a mixture of rice, yogurt, onions, meat and spices. Hyderabad *biryani* is popular for its exquisite taste and

derived from the Persian style of slow cooking. While only a small proportion of the Hyderabad populace are vegetarians, vegetarian food is still quite popular, and is generally served for breakfast and lunch. Breakfast items like Dosa, Vada have origins in Udipi, Karnataka but are influenced by spices native to Andhra Pradesh.

Arunachal Pradesh

The staple food of Arunachal Pradesh is rice, along with fish, meat and green vegetables. Many varieties of rice are available. Lettuce is the most common vegetable, prepared by boiling with ginger, coriander and green chillies. Boiled rice cakes wrapped in leaves is a popular snack. *Thukpa* is a kind of noodle soup common among the Monpa tribe of Arunachal.

Assam



Panta Ilish – a traditional platter of *panta bhat* with fried *ilish* slice, supplemented with dried fish (*shutki*), pickles (*achar*), dal, green chillies and onion – is a popular serving for the Pohela Boishakh festival.

Assamese cuisine, from Assam, a state in North-East India, is a mixture of different indigenous styles with considerable regional variation and some external influences. Although it is characterized by the limited use of spices, the flavors are still strong due to the use of endemic exotic herbs, fruits and vegetables that are either fresh, dried or fermented. Fish is widely used, and so are birds such as duck or pigeon. Preparations are rarely elaborate; the practice of *bhuna*, the gentle frying of spices before the addition of the main ingredients, which is so common in Indian cooking, is absent in the cuisine of Assam. A traditional meal in Assam begins with a *khar*, a class of dishes named after the main ingredient, and ends with a *tenga*, a sour dish. The food is usually served in bell metal utensils. *Pann*, the practice of chewing betel nut, generally concludes the meal.

Bihar



Palak paneer, a dish made from spinach and paneer cheese



Raita is a condiment based on curd and used as a sauce or dip.

The cuisine of Bihar is similar to North Indian cuisine, the food culture in the Hindi Belt, and shares some similarity with neighboring West Bengal and Orissa. Bihari society is not strictly vegetarian, but people avoid eating nonvegetarian food daily. Religious people avoid eating nonvegetarian food on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Bihari people typically eat boiled rice and daal with cooked vegetables for lunch, and roti with cooked vegetables for dinner. Roti and boiled rice are not usually eaten together. Due to this area's strong Hindu-Muslim heritage, river fish, chicken and goat meat are popular meats. Lamb and mutton are considered offensive by many people. Meat-based dishes are eaten mainly with boiled rice. Fish curry is made using mustard paste, a similar technique to the Oriya way of cooking fish. Dairy products, such as yogurt (*dahi*), buttermilk (*mattha*), butter, ghee (clarified butter), and *lassi*, are consumed throughout the year. The region of Champaran is famous for a grilled mutton dish called *taash*. Watery foods, such as watermelon and sherbet made of pulp of the wood-apple fruit, are consumed mainly in the summer months, and dry foods and preparations made of sesame or poppy seeds mainly in the winter months. People generally eat *roti* soaked in milk. There is a custom of eating flattened rice (*poha*) with yogurt and sugar. Bihar is famous for *sattu parathas*, which are *parathas* stuffed with fried chickpea flour, spicy mashed potatoes (*chokha*), fish curry, *litti*, *Bihari kebab*, and *postaa-dana kaa halwaa*. Another common dish is *alu-bhujia* (not to be confused with *Bikaneri Bhujia*, also known as *rajasthani bhujia*), made from potatoes cut like French-fries and cooked in mustard oil and mild spices, and eaten with *roti* or rice-daal.

Tangy *raita* made from winter melon (*lauki*) or unripened papaya, yogurt, and spices, and often a paste of green chilli, ginger, garlic and mustard, is popular in many parts of Bihar.

Chattisgarh

Chattisgarh has many cuisines not found in the rest of India, although the staple diet, like much of the rest of India, is rice. Many Chattisgarhi people consume liquor brewed from the Mahuwa flower. The tribal people of the Bastar region of Chhattisgarh eat whatever is available, choosing food which would not be eaten by people of other states and regions. Red ant chutney is a favorite dish. Flying ants, mushrooms, squirrels, and rats are considered delicacies, but fish and pork constitute a large part of Chhattisgarhi cuisine. Pork forms a major item in their diet and almost every major ceremony starts with the sacrifice of a pig.^[8]

Daman and Diu

Daman and Diu is a union territory of India which, like Goa, was a former colonial possession of Portugal. Consequently, both native Gujarati food and traditional Portuguese food are available. The neighbouring state of Gujarat has prohibited alcohol, and as a result, dining and wining is the most popular pleasure in the territory, with almost all popular brands of foreign liquor available.^{[9][10]}

Goa

Seafood, coconut milk, rice and paste are main ingredients of Goan delicacies. The area is located in a tropical climate, and spices and flavors are intense. Use of Kokum is a distinct feature. Goan cuisine is mostly seafood based; the staple foods are rice and fish. Kingfish (*Vison or Visvan*) is the most common delicacy, others include pomfret, shark, tuna and mackerel. Among the shellfish are crabs, prawns, tiger prawns, lobster, squid and mussels. The cuisine of Goa is influenced by its Hindu origins, four hundred years of Portuguese colonialism, and modern techniques. The state is frequented by tourists visiting its beaches and historic sites, so its food has an international aspect. Goan Saraswat Brahmin and Daivajna Brahmins can be considered facultative vegetarians, as they eat fish and chicken most days, reverting to vegetarianism occasionally for religious reasons, although Brahmins belonging to *Pancha Dravida* are strictly vegetarian.

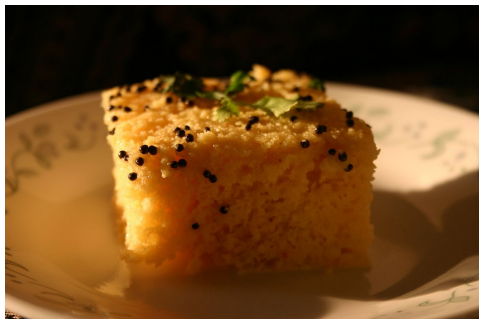


Pomfret fried fish



Pork Vindaloo is a Goan dish popular in many parts of India.

Gujarat



Khaman is a popular Gujarati snack.

Gujarati cuisine is primarily vegetarian. The typical Gujarati *Thali* consists of *Roti* (a flat bread made from wheat flour, and called *Rotli* in Gujarati), *daal* or *kadhi*, rice, and *sabzi/shaak* (a dish made up of different combinations of vegetables and spices, which may be stir fried, spicy or sweet). Cuisine can vary widely in flavor and heat, depending on a given family's tastes as well as the region of Gujarat they are from. North Gujarat, Kathiawad, Kachchh, and South Gujarat are the four major regions of Gujarati cuisine. Many Gujarati dishes are distinctively sweet, salty, and spicy at the same time. The cuisine changes with the seasonal availability of vegetables. In mango season, for example, *Keri no*

ras (fresh mango pulp) is often an integral part of the meal. The spices used also change depending on the season. Garam masala and its constituent spices are used less in summer. Regular fasting, with diets limited to milk and

dried fruits, and nuts, is a common practice.

Haryana

Cattle are common in Haryana, so dairy is a common component of cuisine in this area. Specific dishes include Kadhi Pakora, Besan Masala Roti, Bajra Aloo Roti, Churma, Kheer, Bathua Raita, Methi Gajar, Singri ki Sabzi and Tamatar Chutney.

Lassi and Sherbat are the two popular non-alcoholic beverages of Haryana. There are a number of liquor shops in this Indian state, due to the traffic of many truck drivers.^{[11][12]}

Himachal Pradesh

The daily diet of Himachalis is similar to the rest of north India, including lentil, broth, rice, vegetables and bread, although non-vegetarian cuisine is preferred. Some of the specialities of Himachal include Pateer, Chouck, Bhagjery and chutney of Til.



Kadhi.

Jammu & Kashmir



Rogan Josh is a quite popular Kashmiri dish.

Kashmiri cuisine has evolved over hundreds of years. The first major influence was the food of the Kashmiri Hindus and Buddhists. The cuisine was then influenced by the cultures which arrived with the invasion of Kashmir by Timur from the region of modern Uzbekistan. Subsequently, it has been strongly influenced by the cuisines of Central Asian, Persia, and the North Indian plains. The most notable ingredient in Kashmir cuisine is mutton (lamb), of which there are over 30 varieties.

Kashmiri Pandit food is also very elaborate, and is an important part of the Pandits' ethnic identity. One of the key differences between

Kashmiri cuisine and Punjabi cuisine is that the staple in Kashmiri cuisine is rice, whereas that in Punjabi cuisine is Chappati also known as Roti. The Kashmiri Pandit cuisine usually uses yogurt, oils and spices as such turmeric, Red Chilli powder, Cumin powder, Ginger powder and Fennel Powder.

Jharkhand

Traditional Jharkhand cuisine is equally vegetarian as well as non-vegetarian. These traditional dishes are not available at the restaurants as they have not been commercialised. However on a visit to a tribal village or a tribal wedding in a remote area one can get a chance to taste such exotic food. All preparation except the pickles and festive ones are low on oil and spices.

Karnataka

The cuisine of Karnataka includes many vegetarian and non-vegetarian cuisines. The varieties reflect influences from the food habits of the three neighbouring South Indian states, as well as the state of Maharashtra and Goa to its north. Some typical dishes include Bisi bele bath, Jolada rotti, Chapati, Ragi rotti, Akki rotti, Saaru, Huli, Vangi Bath, Khara Bath, Kesari Bath, Davanagere Benne Dosa, Ragi mudde, and Uppittu. Masala Dosa traces its origin to Udupi cuisine. Plain and Rave Idli, Mysore Masala Dosa and Maddur Vade are popular in South Karnataka. Coorg district is famous for spicy pork curries while coastal Karnataka has seafood specialities. Among sweets, Mysore Pak, Dharwad pedha, Chiroti are well known.

Although the ingredients differ regionally, a typical Kannadiga Oota (Kannadiga meal) includes the following dishes in the order specified and is served on a banana leaf: Uppu(salt), Kosambari, Pickle, Palya, Gojju, Raita, Dessert, Thovve, Chitranna, Rice and Ghee. The coastal regions of Mangalore and Udupi have a slightly varying cuisine with extensive use of coconut in curries and an inclination towards sea food. Some of the Mangalore specialities are pathrode, pundi, neer dosa, kori rotti, tendli kaju, goli baje, basale (type of spinach), kashi halva, etc.



Karnataka food served on a plantain leaf.

Kerala



Spicy fish from Kerala.

Kerala cuisine is a blend of indigenous dishes and foreign dishes adapted to Kerala tastes. Coconuts grow in abundance in Kerala, and consequently, grated coconut and coconut milk are widely used in dishes and curries as a thickener and flavouring ingredient. Kerala's long coastline, numerous rivers and backwater networks, and strong fishing industry have contributed to many sea- and river-food based dishes. Rice is grown in abundance, and could be said, along with tapioca (manioc/cassava), to be the main starch ingredient used in Kerala food. Having been a major production area of spices for thousands of years, black pepper, cardamom, cloves, ginger, and cinnamon play a large part in its food. Most of Kerala's Hindus eat fish

except the Brahmin community and because Kerala has large minorities of Muslims and Christians that are predominantly non-vegetarians, Kerala cuisine has a multitude of both vegetarian and dishes prepared using fish, poultry and meat. Rice and fish along with some vegetables is the staple diet in most Kerala households. Kerala also has a variety of breakfast dishes like idli, dosa, appam, idiyappam, puttu and pathiri.

Lakshadweep

The culinary influence of Kerala is quite evident in the cuisines of Lakshadweep. Since the island has a close proximity with Kerala, hence the cuisines reflect the taste of the inhabitants of that place. The local food of Lakshadweep primarily comprises coconut and sea fish. The people of the island have a great inclination towards the coconut water as it is the most abundant aerated drink of the place. Almost all the dishes have a touch of coconut since it is an integral ingredient of Lakshadweep cuisines.^[13]

Madhya Pradesh

The cuisine in Madhya Pradesh varies from region to region, with the north and west of the state being mainly based around wheat and meat, and the wetter south and east being dominated by rice and fish. Gwalior and Indore abound in milk and milk-based preparations. The street food of Indore is renowned, with shops which have been selling the fare for generations. The Sarafa [Gold Market] converts into a food market in the night with *Bhutte ka kees*, *Sabudane ki khicri*, *Aaloo Patis* from Vijay Chat house, and many more delicacies served for the vegetarian and non-vegetarian palette. The Bhopal is known for meat and fish dishes, such as *rogan josh*, *korma*, *keema*, *biryani pilaf* and kababs such as *shami* and *seekh*. There is street named "Chatori Gali" in old Bhopal where one can find traditional Muslim non-veg fare like *Paya Soup*, *Bun Kabab*, *Nalli - Nihari* to name a few local specialities.



Poha, a popular breakfast dish in Madhya Pradesh.

One other popular dish in the region is the *Dal bafla*. *Bafla* is a steamed and grilled wheat cake dunked in rich ghee which is eaten with *daal* (a pungent lentil broth). It is followed by sweet *ladoos*. Another popular dish in Malwa region (central M.P) is *poha* (flattened rice), it is mostly a breakfast item served with Jalebi.

Indore, Ujjain and Ratlam are world famous for their savory snacks that are made from chick-pea flour. The city restaurants also serve tasty *chaats* (snacks), *kachoris* and samosas.

In summers, the meals tend to end with fruits such as mangoes (*dusseharis*), melons and watermelons, custard apples, bananas, papayas and guavas.

The beverages in the region include lassi (buttermilk), sugarcane juice, a beer and a fine rum which is produced from the cane. There also is the local liquor which is distilled from the flowers of the mahua tree. In the tribal regions a popular drink it is the sap of the *sulfi* tree which can be drunk fresh [non alcoholic] or kept overnight [for fermentation] and drunk later. The date palm toddy is also one of the popular drink in some regions.^[14]

Maharashtra



A dish of Batata vada.



Ragada in a pani puri, a popular snack from Mumbai.

Maharashtrian cuisine covers a range from being mild to very spicy dishes. Bajri, Wheat, rice, *jowar*, vegetables, lentils and fruit form important components of Maharashtrian diet. Popular dishes include *puran poli*, *ukdiche Modak*, *batata wada* and *wada pav*. The staple dishes of Maharashtrian cuisine are based on Bajri, Jowar and Rice(Tandul). The cuisine of Maharashtra has its own distinctive flavors and tastes. It can be divided into two major sections—the coastal and the interior. A part of Maharashtra, which lies on the coast of the Arabian Sea, is loosely called the Konkan and boasts of its own Konkani cuisine, which is a homogeneous combination of Malvani, Gaud Saraswat Brahmin, and Goan cuisines. Besides the coastal cuisine, the interior of Maharashtra—the Vidarbha area, has its own distinctive cuisine known as the Varadi cuisine. As in many states of India, rice is the staple food grain in Maharashtra. Like the other coastal states, there is an enormous variety of vegetables in the regular diet and lots of fish and coconuts are used. Grated coconuts spice many kinds of dishes, but coconut oil is not very widely used as a cooking medium. Peanuts and cashew nuts are widely used in vegetables and peanut oil is the main cooking medium. Another feature is the use of kokum, a deep purple berry that has a pleasing sweet and sour taste. Kokum, most commonly used in an appetizer-digestive called the sol kadhi, is served chilled. During summer another drink called panha made from boiled raw mango is consumed. Rest of the Maharashtra apart from Konkan, uses ground nuts, jaggery, wheat, jowar and bajra extensively. Maharashtrian meal consists of rice and bread both along with 'varan'/'aamtee' – a type of lentils and spiced veggies. Maharashtrian dishes for 'Upwas' have a special mention as most of them are favourites for life time e.g. sabudana khichadi. Missal is also a very popular dish in maharashtra. Bhajani che Thaalipheet is relished

in the entire state.

Manipur

Manipuri cuisine is simple, organic and healthy. Dishes are typically spicy foods that use chili pepper rather than Garam masala. The staple diet of Manipur consists of rice, leafy vegetables, and fish.^[15] Manipuris typically raise vegetables in a kitchen garden and rear fish in small ponds around their house. The Umarok is a very popular chili that is used in the cuisine. It is called in different names in the other north eastern states of India, like king chili, naga jolokia, ghost chili etc.

Meghalaya

Meghalayan cuisine is the local cuisine of one of the Indian States. Meghalaya, also one of the seven sisters and home of three Mongoloid tribes, has a unique cuisine of its own, different from other states in the north east of India. The staple food of the people is rice with spicy meat and fish preparations. They rear goats, pigs, fowl, ducks and cows and relish their meat. The popular dishes are Jadoh, Ki Kpu, Tung-rymbai, and pickled bamboo shoots. Like the other tribes in the north-east, they ferment rice beer, which is consumed in religious rites and at major

ceremonies and celebrations.

Mizoram

The cuisine of Mizoram is very different from most Indian cuisines, mainly sharing similarities with other cuisines from the North-East of India.^[16] Mizo cuisine is a blend of Chinese and north Indian cuisines, and Mizoram cuisine offers mainly non-vegetarian delicacies. Dishes may be served on fresh green banana leaves. Meals are usually less spicy and plain in taste, retaining the nutritive value of the food. A popular dish is Bai, eaten with rice. Which can be made from boiling spinach with pork and bamboo shoot. Another common dish is Sawchair made of rice cooked with pork or chicken.^[17]

Nagaland

Naga cuisine, of the Naga people is known for exotic meats cooked with simple and flavorful ingredients like the extremely hot bhut jolokia or ghost chili, fermented bamboo shoots and soya beans. Dog Meat is widely consumed. The Naga's use oil minimally, they prefer to ferment, dry and smoke their meats and fishes so their food is light. Traditional homes have external kitchens like smoke houses.



Dried fish, prawns, ghost chili and preserved colocasia leaves, common ingredients of Naga cuisine

Orissa



Luchi, is an unleavened flour bread deep fried in oil, mostly eaten in Orissa.

Oriya cuisine is rich and varied, while relying heavily on local ingredients. The flavors are usually subtle and delicately spiced, quite unlike the fiery curries typically associated with Indian cuisine. Fish and other seafood such as crab and shrimp are very popular. Chicken and mutton are also consumed. *Panch phutana*, a mix of cumin, mustard, fennel, fenugreek and kalonji (nigella) is widely used for tempering vegetables and dals, while *garam masala* (curry powder) and *haladi* (turmeric) are commonly used for non-vegetarian curries. Pakhala, a dish made of rice, water, and yogurt, that is fermented overnight, is very popular in summer, particularly in the rural areas. Oriyas are very fond of sweets and no Oriya repast is considered complete without some dessert at the end. Vegetarian foods also include foods prepared without onion and garlic as in temple prasada and brahmin cuisine.

Pondicherry

The union territory of Pondicherry in the country of India was a French settlement for a long time. The French way of life has left a deep

impact on the lifestyle of the people in the union territory of Pondicherry, and French cuisine has become a large influence in cuisine in the territory. The French and the Indo style have given birth to an innovative taste. The influence of the neighboring areas like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala is also visible.

Some of the hot favorite cookery items in Pondicherry are Coconut Curry, Tandoori Potato, Soya Dosa, Podanlangkai, Assad, Curried Vegetables, Stuffed Cabbage, Baked Beans:^[18]



Chungdi Jhola, is a spicy gravy based Prawn curry with different flavours of spices.

Punjab



Dal makhani, is a treasured staple food from Punjab.



Tandoori Chicken is a popular grilled dish.

Punjabi cuisine can be non-vegetarian or completely vegetarian. One of the main features of Punjabi cuisine is its diverse range of dishes. Home cooked and restaurant Punjabi cuisine can vary significantly, with restaurant style using large amounts of ghee, with liberal amounts of butter and cream with home cooked concentrating on mainly upon preparations with whole wheat, rice and other ingredients flavored with masalas.

Within the area itself, there are different preferences. People in the area of Amritsar prefer stuffed parathas and dairy products, of which the area is well known for. There are certain dishes which are exclusive to Punjab, such as Mah Di Dal, saron da saag, and many othe things. The food is tailor-made for the Punjabi lifestyle in which most of the rural folk burn up a lot of calories while working in the fields. The main masala in a Punjabi dish consists of onion, garlic and ginger. Tandoori food is a Punjabi speciality especially for non-vegetarian dishes. Many of the most popular elements of Anglo-Indian cuisine – such as Tandoor, Naan, Pakoras and vegetable dishes with paneer – derive from the Punjab.

Rajasthan



Rajasthani thali.

Rajasthani cooking was influenced by the availability of ingredients in this arid region. In Rajasthan water is at a premium, and hence the food is generally cooked in milk or ghee, making it quite rich. On the other hand, Besan or gram flour is a mainstay of Marwari food mainly because of the scarcity of vegetables in this arid land.

There is a distinctness in the Rajasthani cuisine which comes from a tradition that is old and tranquil, and from a culture that has churned the best from its neighboring states of Gujarat, Haryana and Punjab. Food that could last for several days and could be eaten without heating was preferred. Scarcity of water and fresh green vegetables

have all had their effect on the cooking. Major dishes of a Rajasthani platter includes Daal-Baati, Tarfini, Raabdi, ghewar, Bail-Gatte, Panchkoota, Chaavadi, Laapsi, Kadhi and Boondi, and snacks like Bikaneri Bhujia, Mirchi Bada, Pyaaj Kachori, Dal Kachori.

Sikkim

Sikkim has its own unique dietary culture with specific cuisine and food recipes. In the Sikkim Himalayas traditional foods are an integral part of the dietary culture of the various ethnic groups of people consisting of the Nepalese, Bhutias and Lepchas. Rice is the staple food. Meat and dairy products are also consumed depending on availability. Besides these, various traditional fermented foods and beverages, which constitute of about 20 per cent of the basic diet for long centuries are prepared and consumed. The dietary-culture of this region is mostly reflected in the pattern of food production. Depending on the altitudinal variation, finger millet, wheat, buckwheat, barley, vegetable, potato, soybeans, etc. are grown. Some of the common traditional cuisine with their food recipes has been presented for introduction of dietary culture of the Sikkim Himalayas, as well as for product diversification.



Momos served in a tomato-based broth

Sindh

Sindhi cuisine refers to the native cuisine of the Sindhi people from the Sindh region, Pakistan. While Sindh is not present in modern India, Sindhi food is eaten in India,^[19] where a sizeable number of Hindu Sindhi people migrated following the Partition of India, especially in Sindhi enclaves such as Ulhasnagar^[20] and Gandhidam. The daily food in most Sindhi households consists of wheat-based flat-bread (phulka) and rice accompanied by two dishes, one gravy and one dry.

Tamil Nadu



Dosa served with chutney and sambar.

Tamil food is characterized by the use of rice, legumes and lentils, its distinct aroma and flavour achieved by the blending of spices including curry leaves, tamarind, coriander, ginger, garlic, chili, pepper, cinnamon, cloves, cardamom, cumin, nutmeg, coconut and rosewater. The word "curry" is derived from the Tamil word 'kari' which means "an additive to the main course or a side dish". Rice and legumes play an important role in Tamil cuisine. Lentils are also consumed extensively, either accompanying rice preparations, or in the form of independent dishes. Vegetables and dairy products are essential accompaniments. Tamil Nadu is famous for its spicy non vegetarian dishes. The southern regions in Tamil Nadu, namely; Madurai,

Karaikudi or Chettinaadu are famous for their spicy non vegetarian dishes.

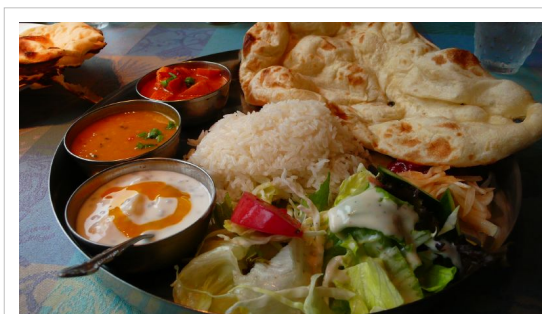
Tripura

The Tripuri (Tipra or Tipperah) people are the original inhabitants of the state of Tripura in North East India. The indigenous Tripuri people comprises the communities of Tipra, Reang, Jamatia, Noatia, Uchoi and others. The Tripuri people have their own culture and cuisine. The Tripuris are non-vegetarian, though there is a minority modern vaishnavite Hindu vegetarian following. The major ingredient of Tripuris cuisine for non-vegetarian food includes pork, chicken, mutton, turtle, fish, prawns, crabs, and frogs.



A bowl of thukpa.

Uttar Pradesh



Uttar Pradesh thali (platter) with Naan bread, Daal, Raita, Shahi paneer, and Salad.

Traditionally the Uttar Pradesh cuisine consists of Awadhi and Mughlai cuisine but a vast majority of the state enjoys sober vegetarian meals with Dal, roti, sabzi and rice constituting the essentials of daily food habits. Pooris and kachoris are relished on special occasions. Uttar Pradesh has been greatly influenced by Mughal (Mughlai cuisine) cooking techniques which is very popular worldwide. The Chaat, samosa and pakora, among the most popular snacks in all of India, are also originally from Uttar Pradesh. Awadhi is a type of West-Central Uttar Pradesh cuisine found in the state's Awadh Region.

Uttarakhand

The food from Uttarakhand is known to be wholesome to suit the high-energy necessities of the mountainous and wintry region. It is traditionally cooked over wood fire. The cuisine mainly consists of food from two different sub regions Garhwali and Kumaoni, though the basic ingredients of both Garhwali and Kumaoni cuisine are the same, there are some basic differences that tell apart the two. The distinctive trait of the Kumaoni cuisine is the tightfisted use of especially milk and milk-based products as cows from hilly areas do not yield high-quality or amount of milk. The similarity between both of them is the liberal use of Ghee and charcoal cooking. Both Garhwalis and Kumaonis are fond of lentil or pulses and 'Bhaatt' or rice. To combat the extreme winters and possible exhausting of food, they also use Badi (sun-dried Urad Dal balls) and Mangodi (sun-dried Moong Dal balls) as substitute for vegetables at times. Main dishes from Uttarakhand include Chainsoo, Kafuli, Jholi, Thechwani, Baadi, etc.

The dishes prepared by the people of Uttarakhan are similar to Uttar Pradesh. They eat rice, pulses, chapatis, vegetable. Tomatoes, onions and spices are used to make the food delicious.



Saag is a popular Kumaoni dish made from any of the various green vegetables like Spinach and Fenugreek

West Bengal



A traditional Bengali meal called, Macher Jhol (Literally translated to Fish in Gravy).

Bengali cuisine is a style of food preparation originating in the eastern India which includes states of Tripura, Barak Valley of Assam and West Bengal. With an emphasis on fish and lentils served with rice as a staple diet, Bengali cuisine is known for its subtle flavours, its confectioneries and desserts, and has perhaps the only multi-course tradition from India that is analogous with French and Italian cuisine in structure. The nature and variety of dishes found in Bengali cooking are unique even in India. Fish cookery is one of its better-known features and distinguishes it from the cooking of the landlocked regions. Bengal's many rivers, ponds and lakes teem with many kinds of freshwater fish that closely resemble catfish, bass, shad or mullet.

Bengalis prepare fish in innumerable ways – steamed or braised, or stewed with greens or other vegetables and with sauces that are mustard-based or thickened with poppyseeds.

Desserts

Indian sweets, known as mithai, are a type of confectionery. Many are made with sugar, milk and condensed milk, and cooked by frying. The bases of the sweets and other ingredients vary by region. In the Eastern part of India, for example, milk is a staple, and most sweets from this region are based on milk products.



Popular sweets, displayed at a shop in Kolkata.



Rasgulla, a popular sweet dish made from cottage cheese.



Payas (or Kheer as it is called in Hindi)

Barfi is a sweet made of dried milk with ground cashews or pistachios. It is customary to attach a thin layer of edible silver foil as decoration.

Chikki A simple sweet made out of peanuts and molasses.

Gulab jamun is an Indian dessert made out of fried milk balls soaked in sweet syrup.

Jalebi is made by deep-frying flour in a circular (coil-like) shape and then dipping in sugar syrup. Imarti is a variant of Jalebi, with a different flour mixture, and has a more coiled texture. Typically Jalebi is brown or yellow, while Imarti is reddish in color. Often taken with milk, tea or even yogurt (or Lassi)

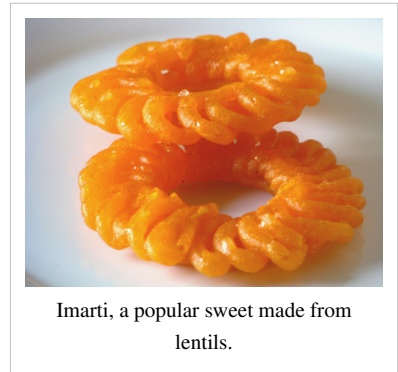
Khaja is a sweet food of Orissa and Bihar states in India. Refined wheat flour, sugar and oils are the chief ingredients of khaja.



Rasmalai, a sweet dish made from cottage cheese.

It is believed that, even 2000 years ago, Khajas were prepared in the southern side of the Gangetic Plains of Bihar. These areas which are home to khaja, once comprised the central part of Maurya and Gupta empires. Presently, Khajas are prepared and sold in the city of Patna, Gaya and several other places across the state of Bihar. Khajas of the Silao and Rajgir are known for their puffiness.

Khajas have travelled to some other parts of India, including Andhra Pradesh. Khaja of Kakinada is a coastal town of Andhra Pradesh. At first, a paste is made out of wheat flour, mawa and oil. It is then deep fried until crisp. Then a sugar syrup is made, which is known as "pak". The crisp croissants are then soaked in the sugar syrup until they absorb the sugar syrup. In Kakinada Khaja, it is made dry outside and full of sugar syrup inside, and is juicy.



Imarti, a popular sweet made from lentils.

Kulfi is Indian ice-cream, where the sweetened milk/cream is frozen in small metal cans to be served frozen. Usually it has a milky appearance, but additional colors may be applied for display. A summer-time favorite in most of India, especially in the northern India. It comes in a variety of flavors such as mango kesar or cardamom. It is typically sold by street-side hawkers who carry around these frozen cans of kulfi in a big earthen pot. The street-side hawkers, called "kulfiwalla" (one who sells kulfi) are much awaited by school kids who savor kulfis during school lunch-times.

Kheer is a sweet rice pudding, usually made from rice and milk. It is also known as "payas", or payasam in South India. It has been a cultural dish throughout the history of India, being usually found at ceremonies, feasts and celebrations. In many parts of India, ancient traditions maintain that a wedding is not fully blessed if payas is not served at the feast during traditional ceremonies like marriage, child birth, annaprasan (first solid feed to child) etc.

Laddu (sometimes transliterated as laddoo) is made of flour and other ingredients formed into balls that are dipped in sugar syrup. The popularity of Laddu is due to its ease of preparation.

Variations in the preparation of Laddu result in a spectrum of tastes. Laddu is often made to celebrate festivals or household events such as weddings.

Malpua is one of the most ancient homemade sweets of India. It is a form of pancake (made of wheat or rice flour) deep fried and dipped in sugar syrup. Several variations exist in different parts of India, and it is especially popular in Bihar, Bengal and Orissa.

Motichoor Ka Ladoo is a sweet food of the central Bihar made from grilled gram flour flakes which are sweetened, mixed with almonds, pressed into balls and fried in ghee. It is now made and consumed throughout India and Pakistan.

Rasgulla is a popular relished sweetmeat in India, which originated in Orissa, in the eastern region of the country, but was made known to the outside world by Nobin Chandra Das of Kolkata. Originally a dessert in Orissa for centuries, this dish made its way to West Bengal when the Oriya cooks started migrating to West Bengal in search of jobs, bringing along the recipe. It was only then that Nobin Chandra Das of Kolkata modified its recipe to give it its current form. This dish is produced by the boiling of small balls of casein in sugar syrup. This sweet dessert can be found in many eastern Indian households.

Sandesh is a sweet made from fine cheese made from cow's milk kneaded with fine ground sugar or molasses. This is a signature sweet from West Bengal in India. Revered for its delicate making, and appreciated by the connoisseur, this represents sweet making at its finest. Sandesh comes in two varieties, "Norom Pak" (the softer version) and "Koda Pak" (the harder version). The softer version although considered better, is fragile. The harder version is robust and often easier for storage. Molasses made from dates can be used to make a special variation of Sandesh called "Noleen Gurher Sandesh" (a Sandesh made from "Noleen Gurh" or molasses from dates) or simply "Noleen Sandesh" (as shown in the figure).

Shrikhand is a creamy dessert made out of strained yogurt, from which all water is drained off, leaving the thick yogurt cream by itself. Adding dry fruits like mangoes enhances the Shrikhand's taste. It is a Western India traditional dish, and it has ancient roots in the Indian cuisine.

Beverages

Non-alcoholic beverages

Tea is a staple beverage throughout India; the finest varieties are grown in Darjeeling and Assam. It is generally prepared as *masala chai*, wherein the tea leaves are boiled in a mix of water, spices such as cardamom, cloves, cinnamon, and ginger, and large quantities of milk to create a thick, sweet, milky concoction. Different varieties and flavors of tea are prepared to suit different tastes all over the country.

Another popular beverage, coffee, is largely served in South India. One of the finest varieties of *Coffea arabica* is grown around Mysore, Karnataka, and is marketed under the trade name "Mysore Nuggets". Indian filter coffee, or *kafee*, is also especially popular in South India.

Lassi is a popular and traditional yogurt-based drink of India. It is made by blending yogurt with water or milk and Indian spices. Salted lassi is more common in villages of Punjab & Indian Porbandar, Gujarat. It is prepared by blending yogurt with water and adding salt and other spices to taste. The resulting beverage is known as salted lassi. Traditional lassi is sometimes flavored with ground roasted cumin. Sweet lassi is a form of lassi flavored with sugar, rosewater and/or lemon, strawberry or other fruit juices. Saffron lassis, which are particularly rich, are also very popular.

Sharbat is a cold sweet beverage that is prepared from fruits or flower petals. It can be served in concentrate form and eaten with a spoon or diluted with water to create the drink. Popular sharbats are made of one or more of the following: Rose, Sandalwood, Bel, Gurhal (Hibiscus), Lemon, Orange, Pineapple, and Falsa (*Grewia asiatica*). These are known to have several medicinal values and are known to be ayurvedic in nature.

Other beverages include *nimbu pani* (lemonade), *chaach*, *badam doodh* (almond milk with nuts and cardamom), Panha (Raw Mango sharbat) and coconut water. In southern India, there is a chilled beverage known as "Panner Soda" or "Gholi Soda", a mixture of carbonated water, rose water, and sugar. Another beverage from the south, rose milk, is also served cold.



While masala tea (left) is a staple beverage across majority of India, Indian filter coffee (right) is especially popular in southern India^{[21][22]}



Lassi served at a restaurant.

Alcoholic beverages

Beer

Beers in India are either lagers (4.8% alcohol) or strong lagers (7.8% alcohol). The Indian beer industry has witnessed steady growth of 10-17 percent per year over the last ten years, a rate of growth that has increased in recent years, with volumes exceeding 170 million cases during the 2008–2009 financial year. With the average age of the population decreasing and income levels on the rise, the popularity of beer in the country continues to increase while the Indian beer industry has witnessed major changes over the last five years.

Miscellanea

There are also several other popular alcoholic drinks in India. Fenny is a Goan liquor made from either coconut or the juice of the cashew apple and fenny (also feni) originated here. The popular brands of fenny are 'Cashyo' (the makers of which spell it feni), 'Reals' (pronounced as Reaals), and 'Big Boss'. Goa has registered for a geographical indicator that would allow it to claim the sole right to term drink created in the region as fenny or 'Goan Cashew Feni'.

Hadia is a rice beer commonly made in the Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh states of India. It may alternatively be spelt *hadiya*. The making involves the use of herbs mixed with boiled rice and left to ferment. The drink is generally ready within a week. It is served cool and has lower alcoholic strength than other Indian country liquors. Palm wine locally known as neera is a sap extracted from Inflorescence of various species of Toddy palms. It is sweet, oyster white, and translucent. Chuak is the traditional Tripuri rice-beer. It is made by fermenting rice in water. It is usually drunk on social occasions of any Tripuri ceremony as a ritual. *Chuak* is offered to village elders on any occasion or celebration in a traditional Tripuri family.

Chhaang is consumed by the people of Sikkim and Darjeeling Himalayan hill region of West Bengal with great enthusiasm. It is usually drunk at room temperature in summer, but is often served piping hot in brass bowls or wooden mugs when the weather is cold. Chhaang is a relative of the more universally known beer. Barley, millet (finger-millet) or rice is used to brew the drink. Semi-fermented seeds of millet are served, stuffed in a barrel of bamboo called the Dhungro. Then boiling water is poured and sipped through a narrow bore bamboo pipe called the Piping.

Eating habits

People in India consider a healthy breakfast, or *nashta*, important. They generally prefer to drink tea or coffee with the first meal of the day. North Indian people prefer roti, parathas, and a vegetable dish, accompanied by *achar* (pickles) and some curd; people of western India, *dhokla* and milk; South Indians, idlis and dosas, generally accompanied by various chutneys.

Lunch in India usually consists of a main dish of rice in the south and east and rotis made from whole wheat in the northern and western parts of India. It typically includes two or three kinds of vegetables. Lunch may be accompanied by items such as kulcha, nan, or parathas. Curd and two or three sweets are also included in the main course. *Paan* (betel leaves), which aid digestion, are often eaten after lunch in parts of India.

Indian families will gather for "evening breakfast" to talk, drink tea, and eat snacks.



A bottle of cashew fenny.

Dinner is considered the main meal of the day, and the whole family gathers for the occasion. Dinner may be followed by dessert, ranging from fruit to traditional desserts like *kheer*, *gulab jamun*, *gajraila*, *qulfi* or *ras malai*.

Etiquette

Several customs are associated with food consumption. Traditionally, meals were eaten while seated either on the floor or on very low stools or cushions. Food is most often eaten without cutlery, instead using the right hand. Often roti (flat bread) is used to scoop the curry without allowing it to touch the hands. Etiquette dictates eating only with one's right hand. Along the coast to the south, where the staple is parboiled rice. In the wheat growing/consuming north, a piece of roti is gripped with the thumb and middle finger and ripped off while holding the roti down with the index finger. Traditional serving styles vary from region to region in India.



Paan usually accompanies post dinner

In South India, cleaned banana leaves, which can be disposed of after the meal, are used traditionally. When hot food is served on banana leaves, the leaves add aroma and taste to the food. Leaf plates are still utilized on auspicious and festive occasions but are less common today.

Traditional ways of dining are being influenced by eating styles from other parts of the world. Among the middle class throughout India, spoons and forks are commonplace.

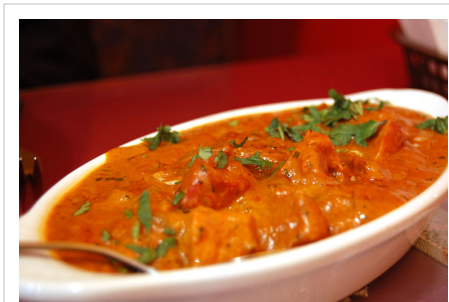
Outside of India

United Kingdom

Further information: English cuisine#Indian and Anglo-Indian cuisine

In 2003, there were as many as 10,000 restaurants serving Indian cuisine in England and Wales alone. According to Britain's Food Standards Agency, the Indian food industry in the United Kingdom is worth £3.2 billion, accounts for two-thirds of all eating out, and serves about 2.5 million British customers every week.^[24]

Specifically Anglo-Indian dishes include mango chutney, mulligatawny soup, balti and chicken tikka masala. British people of non-Indian origin often home-cook curries using ready-made curry powders, sauces or pastes.



Chicken tikka masala, a modified version of Indian chicken tikka. It has been called "Britain's true national dish."^[23]

United States

A survey held in 2007 revealed that more than 1,200 Indian food products have been introduced in the United States since 2000.^[25] There are numerous Indian restaurants across the US. Indian cuisines in the US are quite diverse based on regional culture and climate. Major cuisines are North Indian and South Indian. There are also several places in New York, New Jersey, Chicago and Los Angeles that have specialized cuisines that serve authentic Indian food.^[26] Most of the Indian restaurants in the United States serve Americanized versions of North Indian food, which is generally less spicy. South Indian restaurants also exist and are slowly becoming popular but are less preferred by the locals because the food is considered very spicy.

Canada

Just like the United Kingdom and the United States, Indian cuisine is widely available in Canada. It is most popular in the cities of Toronto and Vancouver, where the majority of South Asians live.

South East Asia

Indian cuisine is very popular in South East Asia because of its strong Hindu and Buddhist historical cultural influence in the region and on its cuisines. Indian cuisine has had considerable influence on Malaysian cooking styles^[5] and also enjoys popularity in Singapore.^{[27][28]} There are numerous North and South Indian restaurants all around Singapore, most of them located in Little India. Singapore is also well known for its fusion take on Indian cuisines. The fish head curry for example, is a local creation with a strong Indian influence reflected by its complex use of spices. Indian influence on Malay cuisine dates to the 19th century.^[29] Other cuisines which borrow Indian cooking styles include Filipino, Vietnamese, Indonesian,^[30] and Thai.^[31] The spread of vegetarianism in other parts of Asia is often credited to ancient Indian Hindu and Buddhist practices.^[32]



An Indian food restaurant in Singapore.

West Asia

Indian cuisine is also fairly popular in the Arab world because of its similarity to and influence on Arab cuisine.^[33] Curry's international appeal has been compared to that of pizza.^[34] Indian tandoori dishes, such as *chicken tikka*, enjoy widespread popularity.^[35] Historically, Indian spices and herbs were among the most sought-after trade commodities. The spice trade between India and Europe led to the rise and dominance of Arab traders, to such an extent that European explorers such as Vasco da Gama and Christopher Columbus set out to find new trade routes with India, leading to the *Age of Discovery*.^[4]

China (including Hong Kong SAR)

Indian food is becoming popular in China and Hong Kong SAR. There are many Indian restaurants in Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen. Hong Kong SAR has more than 50 Indian restaurants. History of Indian restaurant in Hong Kong SAR goes as back as 1980. Most of the Indian restaurants in Hong Kong SAR are in Tsim Sha Tsui or Central area.

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